

Texas bishop calls reported Marian apparitions a ‘fabrication’

FORT WORTH, Texas (CNS) — In an Aug. 26 letter to local Catholics, Bishop Michael F. Olson of Fort Worth said recent “purported apparitions, messages and miracles” of Mary that he had cautioned Catholics about weeks before “are, in fact, a fabrication.”

The bishop said the diocese had received “irrefutable evidence” showing that reported Marian appearances and messages from St. Mark Church in Argyle under the title “Mystical Rose — Our Lady of Argyle” are not true.

He said diocesan officials examined security camera footage that shows “the alleged visionary surreptitiously dropping a rose on the floor of a room” but later claiming the rose was a “miraculous gift of the Virgin Mary.”

The footage was provided by Loreto House, a pro-life assistance center in Denton, where the alleged mystic and others who are part of a self-described “Dry Bones Ministry” had attended eucharistic adoration July 27 and claimed to experience another apparition.

At Bishop Olson’s request, the woman and a man who organizes the “Dry Bones Ministry” were scheduled to meet with the bishop Aug. 23, but the woman canceled, saying she would be available in the future and only with a canon lawyer in attendance.

Bishop Olson said in his letter to diocesan Catholics that he regrets “any scandal that these false claims of ‘Mystical Rose — Our Lady of Argyle’ have caused to the parishioners of St. Mark Catholic Church, within the Diocese of Fort Worth, and beyond.”

He asked local Catholics to “pray for the healing and conversion of all involved in these matters that have brought about discord and disunity where there should be peace and communion” and he urged diocesan priests to be “especially aware of anyone who seeks guidance because of this scandal and to provide compassionate

spiritual counseling."

In early August, the Fort Worth Diocese said claims that the bishop had authenticated local sightings and messages of Mary were "not true."

"These claims of apparitions and messages are not verified or endorsed by the church, and in no way are the claims true that the Mystical Rose is a ministry of the Diocese of Fort Worth or of St. Mark (Parish)," said the Aug. 8 statement.

It also added: "Bishop Olson does not encourage anyone to offer credence or support for these claimed apparitions."

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